

Irma Edna (Brown) Livoni Story

The following is a result of several months of internet searching on Irma Livoni. I kept reading information about Irma Livoni and how she was kicked out of the AA group in Los Angeles and was so distraught she jumped off her apartment building to her death. I lived in Southern California for almost 20 years, had heard lots of stories about her, but never heard the part where she committed suicide. Being an amateur genealogist I decided to see what I could find and put this matter to rest one way or the other.



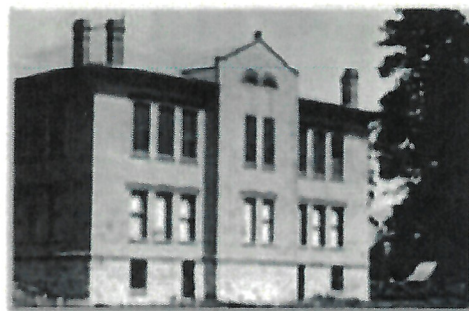
Circa 1925

Irma Edna Brown was born August 16, 1907 in Buckeye Arizona, about 40 miles west of Phoenix. She was the daughter of George Percival Brown and Elsie Almeda Stewart. She attended Buckeye Union High School where she was on the editing staff for the school's year book along with her sister, Norma, in 1925. Shortly after graduating high school, her father moved the family to Phoenix, where he took a job managing a feed store. Later he would become very successful selling real estate.

Irma had two brothers, George Stewart Brown, the oldest, was born May 21, 1906 in Arizona and died on April 11, 1957 in San Francisco, California. He married Helen Springer Meyer and they are both buried in Cypress Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in San Francisco, California. Paul Gordon Brown, her younger brother, was born September 24, 1912 in Buckeye, Maricopa, Arizona and died November 13, 1973 in Orange County, California. He married, Francis Ruth Moore, on August 12, 1944 in Los Angeles, California. He, his parents and grandparents are all buried in Lynnwood Park Cemetery in Long Beach California.

She also had two younger sisters. Norma H. Brown was born February 28, 1909 in Arizona; died January 24, 1996 in Mesa, Maricopa, Arizona. She married Lloyd Persia Robinson. They both served in the military and are buried in the National Cemetery in Mesa Arizona.

The baby in the family was Elsie Jane Brown, born about 1920 in Arizona. Not much is known about her because she was still young (19) when the 1940 census was taken. In 1941 the city directory showed her as a student at the University of Arizona and in 1945 she was a teacher at Emerson school in Phoenix. Only other information I have is that sometime before 1956 she married someone who's last name was Reed. She is listed as Elsiejane Reed in her brother George's obituary.

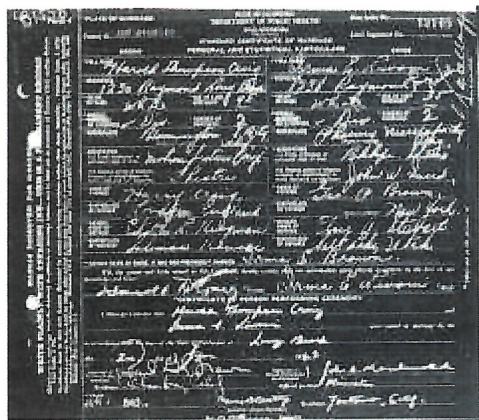


Emerson School 1940

Marriage and divorce records for Maricopa County, Arizona are very hard to access online and I have very little to go on. What I did find was almost 10 years of City Directories for the city of Phoenix, Pasadena, and Los Angeles. So I was able to piece together that Irma married Donald Victor Livoni sometime in 1933 or 1934. I know this because by the time the 1935 city directory was published she was shown as Don Livoni's wife. About this same time period Norma's husband and Irma's husband formed a partnership Robinson & Livoni, and operated a Quality Oil gas station in Phoenix. Don's brother, Carl Jr., worked at the gas station for at least 1 year. The partnership between the brothers-in-law would only last about three years and by 1937 both men were working at other jobs.

The divorce of Donald and Irma was also hard to pin down. According to city directories I put it sometime in 1937 or 1938. Donald and Irma were living in Los Angeles in the 1937 city directory but by the time the 1938 directory came out Donald was still in LA and Irma was living with her dad in Phoenix.

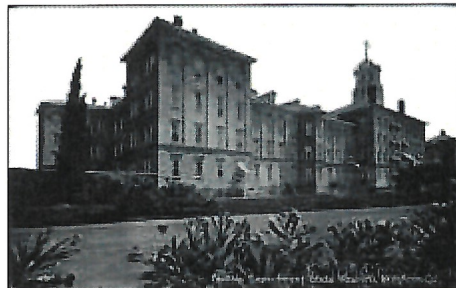
Both Don and Irma remarried. My best estimate for Don's second marriage was about 1940. The name of his wife was Mary Margaret Farrell. According to the 1937 Phoenix city directory she lived across the street from Don's parents. They lived at 517 N 2nd street and she lived at 514 N 2nd Street. Her occupation was listed as stenographer. It's a safe bet that his family knew her before they were married.



(See exhibits)

As for Irma, her second marriage took place in Long Beach California on June 2, 1943. She married Harold Thompson Craig, who was born July 7, 1897 in California and died May 18, 1956 in Los Angeles. He was the son of Henry Craig and Edith L Kingsman. The copy of their marriage certificate provides much of the early information on Irma. It gave her maiden name, mother and father's names, place of date of birth and so on. From this information I was able to construct much of her family's history at the beginning of this report.

According to the 1940 U.S. Census, Irma Livoni was an inmate at the Stockton State Hospital for the Insane. The only info the census gave about her was female, white, age 33 and single. This census also helps to narrow down the date of Don's 2nd marriage. The hospital opened in 1853 and was California's first psychiatric hospital. In the early part of 1920 an entire ward dedicated to female patients was added and was said to be the best not only in California but also surrounding states.



Stockton State Hospital

When I ask why Irma was being kicked out, all Sybil would say is "she wasn't very lady like." She came to meetings all dressed up and turning heads and lots of flirting. She also added that it was partly the insistence of the jealous wives of the members that helped get Irma banned from AA. Remember there were only a handful of females in all of AA and maybe only 4 or 5 in Southern California in 1941.

I actually saw a carbon copy of this letter in the LA Central Office Archives. The carbon copy was not on letterhead but was on thin yellow paper....almost like tissue paper. The one floating around Southern California I believe is a "reproduction" that the Southern California Area 5 Archives Committee created sometime in the 1970's. The font on these copies is consistent with an IBM Select II typewriter and not the font from any 1941 vintage manual typewriters. If a real copy does exist it would be great if it could be scanned and put on line instead of just a transcript of this letter.



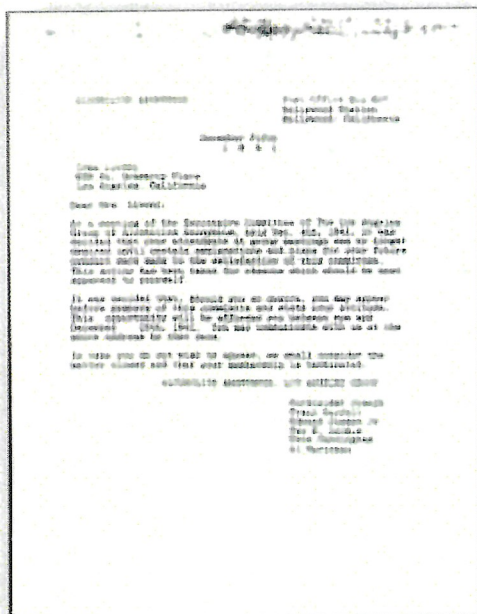
The address on the letter, 939 S. Gramercy Place, is located in Central Los Angeles, Wilshire district to be more exact. In 1941 Central LA was a very nice area of town. The address is a four story apartment building with about 30 apartments. It was built in the 1920's and is still standing. I believe, if she was single, she would have to have a pretty good job to live there.

Now that I live in Wisconsin and have no access to any AA archives, I spend most my time doing genealogy. With all of the tools available to me I have found a good deal about Irma Livoni and what I have found is as follows:

- 1910 US Census showed a Irma E Brown was born in Buckeye, Maricopa County, Arizona about 1907
- 1920 US Census showed a Irma E Brown age 12 was living in Maricopa County, Arizona
- 1930 US Census showed a Irma Edna Brown age 22, single and was living in Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona -- occupation: stenographer
- 1930 US Census has Donald V Livoni was living with his uncle in Long Beach CA. (shows he was single)
- 1935 City Directory shows a V Don Livoni living in Phoenix, Arizona with his parents - Irma E. listed as wife
- 1939 City Directory shows Donald Livoni living in Pasadena CA (no wife listed)
1940 City Directory shows a Don Livoni living in Phoenix, Arizona with his parents (no wife listed)
- 1940 US Census shows an Irma Livoni as an inmate in the State Hospital for the Insane in Stockton California - marital status was single
- 1940 US Census shows a V D Livoni living in Phoenix, Arizona with his parents - marital status was married (no wife listed)
- 1941 City Directory shows a Mary Livoni living in Phoenix, Arizona at the same address as Don's parents (Mary is Don's 2nd wife)

The hospital closed in 1996 and all of the records are now housed in the State of California Archives located in Sacramento. The collection consists of 132 bound volumes, 17 file folders, 247 photographs, over 500 photo negatives and approx 1,500 35mm slides. All of the records are classified and in most cases only released to family members or loved ones. Patient confidentiality is strictly enforced and sometimes information is withheld from family members even if the patient is deceased.

As a general rule no information is to be released until 75 years after the patient's released date. This means that Irma's information will not be considered for release until 2015 or 2016. Even after providing the information found on the 1940 U.S. Census, the employee at the state archives would neither confirm nor deny Irma was a patient at this hospital. I was told again in the strongest way possible that after the 75 year period is up there is no real guarantee any information will be released to anyone other than family members. Without being able to see her file there is no way to tell what medical condition she had that would result in her being committed to this hospital.



Now, in regards to the letter dated December 5, 1941, from the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Group of Alcoholics Anonymous to Irma Livoni, I lived in Southern California for nearly 20 years, 12 of which I served as Mid Southern California Area 9 Archivist. I was there the same time Harry the Wino was there and he introduce me to many of the longtimers including Sybil. She told me the same story about Irma and I can remember hearing her tell it at least 2 other times. Not once did I hear Sybil say Irma committed suicide. She always said she died drunk." I believe had Irma committed suicide Sybil would have included this information in the story if only to drive home the point that there were grave consequences of this committees actions.

While in Southern California I tried to find out what happened to her. No one I ever spoke with could tell me anything about her after she left AA. I use the Los Angeles Public Library and searched their data base of newspapers and could never find an obituary or any articles that had the name Irma Livoni. I got some conflicting info about her from members. I heard she was single, married and even divorced. I was told she was a waitress, a secretary and she worked in the shipyards in Long Beach. Sybil said she was a divorced bookkeeper. US Census confirm her occupation as stenographer and bookkeeper.

- 1941 Feb World War II Army Enlistment of Donald V Livoni it listed him as married - No image was available, but I am sure Mary would be listed as his wife
- 1941 in a letter dated December 5, 1941 Irma Livoni is kicked out of A.A. meetings in Los Angeles
- 1943 California Marriage Certificate #12149 for a Irma E Livoni and a Harold Thompson Craig recorded in Marriage Book 1939 Page 65 with the marriage taking place on June 2, 1943. It showed this was a 2nd marriage for both parties, her maiden name was Brown and her occupation was bookkeeper. They were both living in Long Beach and were next door neighbors.
- 1947 City Directory shows a Don Livoni living in Phoenix, Arizona with his parents with a new wife Mary Livoni
- 1956 California Death Index listed Harold T Craig born 7 Jul 1897 in California died May 18 1956 in Los Angeles County. SSN 526-10-5776
- 1969 Social Security Death Index shows Donald V. Livoni died Sept 4, 1969 in Orange Co. CA
- 1974 Social Security Death Index shows Irma Craig, SSN 561 12 4758, born August 16, 1907 died Aug 1974 and last known residence was Long Beach CA
- 1974 California Death Index listed Irma E Craig born Aug 16, 1907 in Arizona died August 24, 1974 in Los Angeles County.

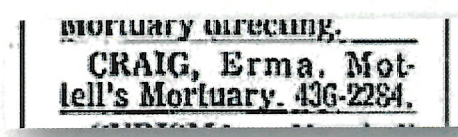
The last and perhaps the most crucial documentation I have is the California death certificate for Irma Craig. It has all of the usual information; birth and death dates, parents names. But most of all it has the cause of death. According to the State of California Irma died of



Arteriosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease (heart attack). She died on August 24, 1974 at 8:00 pm. She was laid to rest in the Brown's Family plot in Section Myrtle, Lot 114, in Lynnwood Park Memorial Cemetery in city of Long Beach in the County of Los Angeles, California. Her last known address was 1205 Doidge Court, Long Beach CA. This small stucco house is where she passed away.

One sad note I found her obituary in the Aug 26, 1974 Press-Telegram Long Beach, California. It read simply "CRAIG, Erma (name misspelled) Monttoll Mortuary 436-2284." This mortuary has since merged with another. When I contacted them I was told they no

longer had records going back to 1974. I described the obit to the director of the funeral home and was told this was normal for a person who died with no next of kin or anyone close to provide information for a proper obituary. As it turned out her two sisters out lived Irma and her sister, Norma, provided much of the information on the death certificate. During my research I found no children born to Irma from either marriage.



I am convinced this is the same person that is named in the December 1941 letter and also convinced she did not commit suicide over this matter unless it was 33 years after being asked to leave the A.A. group. I know I could not have continued drinking the way I was drinking for 33 more years. This leads me to the belief she might not had even had a real drinking problem. Besides that was just one meeting. In December 1941 there were five other meetings (Huntington Beach, San Bernardino, North Hollywood, Inglewood, and Pasadena) going on in Southern California and she could have surely attended one of them. Also our Big Book states ours is not the only way. Perhaps she found church was enough to help her.

Like so many of the myths in A.A. that are portrayed as fact, I hope this info might help to at least provide another theory on what might have really happened to Irma Livoni after she left AA and not what we think might have happened to her. It all comes down to the fact we do not know what really happened and it is better to admit we don't know than adding embellishments and pass them off as true facts. Yes it was terrible what happen to Irma but it is even worse what has been made up about her, and perhaps tarnished her good name

Compiled by:

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA

MARRIAGE LICENSE

1939 Page 65 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

NO. LB 1570

TO ANY JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT, JUSTICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL, JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT, JUDGE OF THE MUNICIPAL COURT, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, JUDGE OF ANY POLICE COURT, CITY RECORDER, PRIEST OR MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL OF ANY DENOMINATION:

Form 4

PLACE OF MARRIAGE

TO SOLEMNIZE, WITHIN SAID COUNTY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH VITAL STATISTICS

State Index No. 12449 Local Registered No.

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

GROOM: Harold Thompson Craig, 1230 Raymond, Long Beach, Cal. 45, White, Divorced, Police Inspector, 3/19/14, Birmingham, Ala., 37, 1230 Raymond, Long Beach, Cal.

BRIDE: Irma E. Brown, 1233 Raymond, Long Beach, Cal. 35, White, Divorced, 2, Police Inspector, 1233 Raymond, Long Beach, Cal., New York, 1900, John W. Brown, 1233 Raymond, Long Beach, Cal., Mrs. J. Stewart, 1233 Raymond, Long Beach, Cal.

MARGIN RESERVED FOR FINING. WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD.

NAME OF BRIDE IF SHE WAS PREVIOUSLY MARRIED: Irma E. Brown

CERTIFICATE OF PERSON PERFORMING CEREMONY: Harold Thompson Craig, Irma E. Brown

20) Long Beach, Cal. 43

FILED JUL 1 1943

Trans. S. Slaty, Registrar of Vital Statistics, Los Angeles, Calif.

Marriage Certificate of Irma and Harold Craig. Recorded in Marriage Book 1939 Page 65, docket number 12449 of the records in the Los Angeles County Clerks Office. Note the address of the bride and groom.....they were next door neighbors.



Irma age 18

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CERTIFICATION OF VITAL RECORD

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

74-112432

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

0190-041085

STATE FILE NUMBER 74-112432		OFFICE OF THE STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS		LOCAL REGISTRAR NUMBER AND CERTIFICATE AUTHORITY 0190-041085
1. NAME OF DECEASED—FIRST NAME Irma		11. MIDDLE NAME Edna		12. LAST NAME Craig
3. SEX Female		4. COLOR OR RACE Caucasian		5. BIRTHPLACE Arizona
8. NAME AND BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER George F. Brown, California		9. MOTHER NAME AND BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER Elaine Almeda Stewart, Utah		10. CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY U. S. A.
14. LAST OCCUPATION Bookkeeper		15. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER 626-10-5970		16. MARITAL STATUS Widowed
13. PLACE OF DEATH—HOSPITAL OR OTHER IN-PATIENT FACILITY 1206 Doidge Court		17. NAME OF SURVIVING SPOUSE IN WHOLE OR PART None		18. HUSBAND OR WIFE DECEASED Yes
19. USUAL RESIDENCE—STREET ADDRESS (STREET NO. AND NAME OR LOCATION) 1205 Doidge Court		20. NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Norma E. Robinson 8150 E. El Paso Street Mesa, Arizona		21. CITY OR TOWN Long Beach
22. CORONER—NAME OF PERSON WHO HAS THE BODY AND WHERE KEPT Matthew's Mortuary		23. NAME OF CLERGY OR CHURCH Good Shepherd Rectory Gardena, California		24. EMBALMER—SIGNATURE OF PERSON (INCLUDE LICENSE NUMBER) C. Barry Johnston S238
25. PART I DEATH WAS CAUSED BY: (A) IMMEDIATE CAUSE Acute bacterial Cardiovascular Disease (B) DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF (C) DUE TO, BUT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF (D) LAST		26. PART II OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS—(Equipment to state, but do not include the top treatment codes upon the form)		27. LOCAL REGISTRAR—SIGNATURE DATE AUG 29 1974
33. SPECIFY ACCIDENT SOURCE OR INQUIRY		34. PLACE OF INQUIRY		35. INQUIRY AT WORK
37. PLACE OF INQUIRY		38. DATE OF INQUIRY		39. HOUR
40. DESCRIBE HOW INQUIRY OCCURRED		41. DATE OF DEATH		42. TIME OF DEATH
STATE REGISTRAR		A 7 B X C 1 D		4124

This is to certify that this document is a true copy of the official record filed with Vital Records.

DATE ISSUED

Tony Agurto
TONY AGURTO, MPA
STATE REGISTRAR OF VITAL RECORDS

JUL 23 2013



100372576



This copy not valid unless prepared on engraved border displaying seal and signature of the State Registrar.

ANY ALTERATION OR ERASURE VOIDS THIS CERTIFICATE

191570 Form 4

MARGIN RESERVED FOR FINDING
WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD
Certificate of marriage must be obtained in addition to marriage license and be filled out in presence of County Clerk issuing license.
Civil Code, § 691.
Certificate must be filed with County Recorder by person performing ceremony within three days thereafter. Political Code, § 3076.
Certificate can not be accepted for filing after period of one year from date of event except by authority of Superior Court order judicially establishing fact of the marriage. Statutes 1919, Chapter 272.
Statutes 1919, Chapter 272.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
VITAL STATISTICS

PLACE OF MARRIAGE
County of LOS ANGELES

STATE INDEX No. 12149
Local Registered No.

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

GROOM BRIDE

1. FULL NAME Harold Thompson Craig Anna E. Brown
2. RESIDENCE 1230 Raymond Long Blvd 1238 Raymond Long Blvd
3. COLOR OR RACE White White
4. AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY 45 35
5. SINGLE OR DIVORCED OR DIVORCED 2 Div. 2
6. BIRTHPLACE Bloomington Ind. Phoenix Arizona
7. OCCUPATION Motion picture prof. Bkkr. Hotel
8. NAME OF FATHER Harry Craig Geo. P. Brown
9. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER New York
10. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Elizabeth R. Mulgrew
11. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER Indiana Chicago
12. MAIDEN NAME OF BRIDE, IF SHE WAS PREVIOUSLY MARRIED Anna E. Brown
13. IF THE GROOM AND BRIDE NAMED IN THIS CERTIFICATE, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN THEREIN IS CORRECT, TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.
14. I Henry Garthly that I Harry Garthly that
15. CERTIFICATE OF PERSON PERFORMING CEREMONY
Name of Person Performing the Ceremony: Harold Thompson Craig
Signature of Person Performing the Ceremony: [Signature]
Official Position: Minister
Residence: Alhambra, Calif.
Name of County: Los Angeles
Date: JUN 7 1943

Filed out in the presence of [Signature]

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Post Office Box 607
Hollywood Station
Hollywood, California

December Fifth
1 9 4 1

Irma Livoni
939 So. Gramercy Place
Los Angeles, California

Dear Mrs. Livoni:

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of The Los Angeles Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, held Dec. 4th, 1941, it was decided that your attendance at group meetings was no longer desired until certain explanations and plans for your future conduct were made to the satisfaction of this committee. This action has been taken for reasons which should be most apparent to yourself.

It was decided that, should you so desire, you may appear before members of this committee and state your attitude. This opportunity will be afforded you between now and December 15th, 1941. You may communicate with us at the above address by that date.

In case you do not wish to appear, we shall consider the matter closed and that your membership is terminated.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. LOS ANGELES GROUP

Moratsimer Joseph
Frank Randall
Edmund Jussen Jr.
Fay E. Loomis
Pete Cunningham
Al Marineau

*Copy of the letter that was circulating Southern California in the 1990's when I was there. As you can clearly see this was not typed on a 1941 circa typewriter. So this must be just a **facsimile** of the original.*



Irma and Harold Craig's gravemarker in Lynwood Park Cemetery, Lynwood, Los Angeles County, California. Section Myrtle Lot 114